



# DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

## news release

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

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NO AIRBOAT HUNTING ON LOXAHATCHEE,  
INTERIOR SECRETARY WATT DECIDES

No airboat hunting for white-tailed deer will be permitted on the Loxahatchee National Wildlife Refuge in Florida, Secretary of the Interior James Watt announced today.

"After carefully examining the recommendations of our professional wildlife managers and also the comments received from the public," Watt said, "I have banned the use of airboats in the deer hunts which will begin in October of this year. There is simply too great a potential for damage to the vegetation and wildlife in the refuge."

Watt added that otherwise, he supports the deer hunt, limited to 6 days and 100 hunters per day, because there is adequate biological information that it is compatible with sound wildlife management practices.

The Loxahatchee refuge was opened to big game hunting on May 16, 1983, and special regulations for conducting the deer hunt were proposed in the August 2, 1983, Federal Register. The regulations proposed to allow 6 days of hunting by permit on 3 weekends this fall (October 29-30, November 5-6, and November 12-13). Two alternatives were outlined for the third weekend, one allowing the use of airboats and one without.

Final regulations governing the deer hunt are expected to be published in the Federal Register this month.